

From: John Franks
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 9:56am
Subject: Opposition to Settlement

I wish to record my strong opposition to the proposed settlement of the Microsoft anti-trust case.

While there has been great harm to consumers in general caused by Microsoft practices and the proposed settlement does little or nothing to prevent continuation of these practices, I would like to focus on one single thing.

Microsoft has done nearly irreparable damage to the free exchange of ideas in written form through its monopoly of information formats. There is no need for written documents not to be interchangeable. Microsoft Word was designed and is maintained in such a way as to make exchange with other programs difficult or impossible. This forces many people to purchase MS Word who do not wish to use it. The same type of monopoly is being pursued in other formats, music and video foremost among them. The monopoly in all these formats is unnatural and created only for financial gain. It could only be created by leveraging the operating system monopoly which Microsoft enjoys. Microsoft has proven its success at creating new format monopolies by bundling software with the operating system which only uses its proprietary formats.

The current proposed settlement does nothing to remedy this.

Sincerely,

John Franks
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